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## **NOAA Fisheries Service Rejects a Petition to List Puget Sound Rockfish under ESA**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) said today that it was denying a petition to list two species of Puget Sound rockfish under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) because the petition failed to present substantial scientific information indicating that listings may be warranted.

Last September, NOAA Fisheries was formally petitioned by Sam Wright to list populations of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish in Puget Sound. In 1999, Wright had petitioned NOAA Fisheries to list 18 fish species in Puget Sound. That petition was accepted for seven of the petitioned species, including both copper and quillback rockfish, and NOAA Fisheries scientists embarked on a year-long investigation to review the status information and relevant conservation measures for these seven species. The agency concluded in April 2001 that neither Puget Sound copper nor quillback rockfish warranted ESA protection.

NOAA Fisheries found that the recent petition did not present any new data for these Puget Sound rockfish populations, nor did it provide other information indicating that these populations are at risk, or that the findings of the 2001 review should be re-evaluated. The agency concluded that the petition failed to present substantial information to indicate that the petitioned actions may be warranted.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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